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ABSTRACT

This speech was presented at the 1976 American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation national convention by the principal of an Iowa high school. It discusses the development and effectiveness of the Jefferson High School Booster Club which was developed by an interested parent and has been quite successful. The club has assisted the athletic program in three dimensions: (1) with manpower, (2) with finances, and (3) in public relations. Manpower has been provided on all levels by persons working as ticket takers and ticket sellers, and by persons running concession stands at athletic events. Financially, the club has helped the program with profits from the concession stands and the tickets. Through these efforts the club has also improved public relations between schools and within the community. (DMT)

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What Can A Booster Club Do?

The goal of any school Athletic Director should be a well organized and comprehensive athletic program which best meets the needs of boys and girls.

In building an effective athletic program, we need to take advantage of various means to forward the program. At our school we have found a very valuable help is an active, well-organized Booster Club. The assistance they have given our program throughout the years has been accomplished in a variety of ways. It all started like this --

In 1952, 24 years ago, a father of an elementary girl student came to me and asked if he could spearhead the formation of an Athletic Booster Club for our Senior High School. Since this was a new idea, I felt I needed the counsel and approval of our veteran Principal. Upon hearing of this proposal, he wisely gave it his blessing with one restriction. Any Booster Club would boost the athletic program, not fire or hire coaches. Throughout these many years of existence since then, we have had no problems with this. In fact, we feel extremely fortunate to have had the Booster Club assisting us and would highly recommend that you start one, if you don't already have one.

Our Booster Club has helped us many different ways which may be classified into the three broad categories of manpower, financial gifts and public relations.

Taking a look at the first category of manpower (in these days of Title IX, we'd better say "person power") provided by our Club, the Boosters have assisted us in these ways.

1. They provide ticket sellers and takers for all of our indoor athletic events, some track meets and baseball games. Volunteers sign up that they will work; we give them a list of the athletic events

SP009 996

from which they select a minimum of four, and then we adjust their dates to our needs. During the sports' seasons we send them reminders of their working dates just as we do officials and visiting teams.

2. They film many of our games and meets with our club's 16 mm camera. Our athletic fund buys the film and pays for the developing. Again, we have been fortunate throughout the years to have Boosters who are very capable photographers.

3. They serve meals to visiting teams at tournaments we host. The Booster's wives do a great job in providing the type of meal that athletes require - doing all the work while charging a minimal fee. They also furnish a free meal to the officials, visiting coaches and all of our tournament workers.

4. They run the concession stands for our indoor athletic events. They do it all - order, sell, clean up etc. During the 1974-75 school year, they grossed over $5,000.00 with a net of slightly more than $2,500.00.

5. They provide person power to help out at Athletic Banquets - take tickets, decorate, etc.

6. They cooperate with the other two public high school Booster Clubs in our city. Together the Booster Clubs sell books of football tickets with the receipts going into a common fund to be split three ways. Incidentally, in the two years of this cooperative sale, our Club has led in sales. Last fall our Club sold over $9,300.00 of the $20,000.00 +. The three Clubs also suggest to our District Athletic Council constructive improvements which could be made in the Athletic Program. An example of this is their proposal to rearrange some football stadium seats for better crowd control.

In all groups of people, we find talents and abilities of various

kinds. In a Booster Club you may have the advantage of special knowledge of photographers, lawyers, salesmen, food management specialists, accountants, doctors, mechanics and all of the other vocations and professions we could mention. They can willingly share their knowledge.

Our Booster Club helps us not only with person power but financially also. This is very important because our state of Iowa allows school tax funds to be used only for coaches salaries and facilities. We find it very hard for admissions to cover all other expenses. Throughout the years it's developed that each year we challenge the Club with a financial goal. This goal is to help meet our athletic budget or to purchase some extra items that would enhance our athletic program. Our challenge this year was for $15,000.00 to help meet our $45,000.00 budget. This challenge was larger than usual because of unusually large uniform purchases, mostly for our girls' sports. However, during the past five years, the Club has given us these amounts: 1974-75 - $10,000.00; 1973-74 - $10,000.00; 1972-73 - $10,000.00; 1971-72 - $5,000.00 and 1970-71 - $5,500.00. Their main source of income is the concession rights at our 15,000 seat District Football Stadium in which 3 public and 2 parochial high schools and one college play all of their home games. Since games are played on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and some Saturday afternoons with most of the night games being Sophomore/Varsity doubleheaders, our concession stands are open for as many as 55 football games each fall. The concession contract with the district also requires our selling at all other events in the stadium such as track meets, Drum and Bugle Corps contests, Band Festivals and Circus performances. Our Club is highly and competively organized in accomplishing this great task - all done by volunteer help. Here are some details: There are four concession stands, each of which has its

own manager who recruits his own workers. One Booster is the purchasing agent who purchases all sale items upon the request and consultation with the stand managers. One person is in charge of popping the popcorn. He spends all day Wednesday and part of Thursday doing this, putting the popped corn in large plastic bags. A group of women work each Thursday sacking the corn. These gals enjoy the friendship and social aspects of this so much that they even have their own potluck lunch after the fall season - celebrating the end of another football year.

With this strong financial support, we have found that several procedures concerning these money gifts must be followed:

a. All Booster Club cash gifts are given to the Athletic Director to be deposited in the Athletic Fund. Coaches occasionally have ideas as to how the money should be spent, but we feel there must be a central control.

b. For the Booster Club to maintain its non-profit status, any and all monies given to the Athletic Fund may NOT be designated for a specific project. The Booster Club treasurer is a retired Internal Revenue Service Executive who keeps us reminded of this. However, each year we do give the Club a printed detailed report as to how the money was spent.

The concession stands are our major source of income for the Booster Club. However, some other sources for our cities sister schools are a huge garage sale with donation of items for sale, a Sunday pancake brunch which is widely advertised and patronized, and supplying all the sellers/takers for high school football games in our stadium for a contracted figure. The Iowa City Booster Clubs go out each Sunday of the football season when the University of Iowa has had a home game on Saturday and they, for profit, clean and sweep the stadium.

The third broad category is what we gain in public relations. Well informed sports enthusiasts are happier and more understanding of any problems, losses in the various contests, etc. Consequently we strive to keep all communication lines open, giving them all budget figures, gate receipts figures, equipment costs etc. We try to inform them of any scheduling difficulties, disciplined athletes, or other items that may be misunderstood and have a bearing on our athletic program. Coaches are requested to be at meetings, presenting information about their squads and answering questions. Coaches are also encouraged to help in the concession stands during their off-season. Boosters notice and do appreciate their participation.

These, then, are some of the things your Booster Club can do for you. In return, you should certainly do something for your active Boosters. For their many hours of dedicated service, we like to recognize our Boosters in these ways:

1. We give a family pass to all indoor athletic events to those who work at least four times in our concession stands, or as ticket seller/takers.
2. Those who work in the football concession stands are invited with their spouses to the football banquet as guests.
3. At an athletic banquet, those who have worked for ten years are recognized with presentation of a certificate and a lifetime pass to our athletic events. This was started in 1967. To date, 28 have been recognized in this way.
4. Officers' names are engraved on a large plaque in one of our trophy cases.
5. Officers' pictures are usually placed in the Athletic Programs.

In closing, during the years we've had a Booster Club we feel

we've been very fortunate at Jefferson High School in having some terrific men and women who gave of their time and effort unselfishly and untiringly. We appreciate them and can't praise them enough. It does require additional time and effort on the part of the Athletic Director in coordination and contact with the Booster Club and its projects. This additional time and effort is well spent. Our Booster Club has been and continues to be a valuable supportive aid to our Athletic Program.

I would encourage you to foster an active Booster Club in your school.